

**Amendments in the Claims:** (struck-through parts deleted and underlined parts added)

Claims 1-11 (cancelled)

12. (previously presented) A method protecting a rose bush comprising the  
5 steps of:
- providing a protective covering;
  - positioning the protective covering over the rose bush;
  - providing a flexible panel, said panel having a top side, a bottom side, and a  
10 peripheral edge, said peripheral edge comprising an elastomeric loop, a  
portion of said panel positioned within said peripheral edge comprising a  
resiliently elastic mesh material;
  - providing a plurality of elongate members each having an attached end attached to  
said peripheral edge and a free end extending away from said panel, said  
15 elongate members being spaced from each other, each of said elongate  
members being flexible, each of said elongate members being resiliently  
elastic, said plurality of elongate members including at least four elongate  
members;
  - providing a plurality of spikes, each of said spikes being attached to one of said  
20 free ends of said elongate members; and
  - positioning said bottom side of said panel against an upper side of the protective  
covering and driving said spikes into a ground surface such that said  
elongate members are in a stretched state.